REASONS

AGAINST GIVING

A TERRITORIAL GRANT

TO A

COMPANY OF MERCHANTS,

TO COLONIZE AND CULTIVATE

The Peninsula of Sierra Leona,

ON THE

COAST OF AFRICA.

LONDON:

PRINTED IN THE YEAR M.DCC.XCI.

REASONS, &c.

First. THAT by the treaties exiſting with the other European powers, and confirmed by the laſt treaty of Paris, not only to them, but to America; who all have a right to reſort and trade thereto, according to the uſual cuſtom, ſo expreſſed in the treaty of Paris.

Second. That the Parliament of Great Britain paſſing a law to colonize and grant lands in Africa, would be declaring, that they had the right of ſovereignty, and would be a direct infringement on the treaty of peace, and might alarm the powers of Europe.

Third. That if we claim our right from the purchaſe of king Tom, it would be declaring to Ruſſia, Pruſſia, the Emperor, Sweden, France, Spain, and America, that they had equal right to purchaſe from the kings and princes on the Coaſt, and to ſettle colonies on the coaſt of Africa. Query? Whether it would be for the advantage of England, who has got colonies already ſettled under her own controul, and a monopoly of the trade eaſily protected from other powers, to ſettle new colonies on a continent where they have no power or controul over the numerous natives?

Fourth. Whether, after paſſing an act of Parliament, giving power to the king to grant the St. George's

George's Bay Company a certain diſtrict of land on the coaſt of Africa, and power to them to purchaſe more from the natives, does not bind this country to protect them; as it may be ſuppoſed that they are encouraged to ſettle for the benefit of the mother-country; and after having ſettled there, and made purchaſes by authority, would it not be unjuſt in this country not to protect them and their rights, not only againſt all the powers of Europe, but the natives on the coaſt of Africa? And, ſituated as we are by the treaties with the other powers of Europe, *and the ideas of the times, of the rights of kings to diſpoſe of their territories, without being agreed to by the whole of their ſubjects*, might not his ſucceſſor claim it back, the ſeller having no right to diſpoſe of them? Under ſuch circumſtances, would it be right to paſs an act of Parliament giving ſuch powers to individuals, without this country was to be benefited materially by it in its trade, navigation, and commerce, and to be ſecured and opened to the nation at large?

Fifth. The peninſula of Sierra Leona being open to all European naval powers, and to America to trade thereto,—is it not fair to ſuppoſe, that whoever will ſupply the natives with the manufactures they want, and will give them the greateſt price for the produce or commodities of Africa, will be the people they will give the preference to?

Sixth. The grant is aſked for by a company for the increaſe of the trade and navigation of this country, and for the encouragement of its manufactures. In ſuch caſe the queſtion is, whether this can be done beſt by leaving the trade open to the nation at large, or by giving a monopoly, or excluſive

right to a company, when the trade muſt be open to individuals of other nations?

Seventh. Which can fit out ſhips on the eaſieſt and beſt terms, a company not converſant in buſineſs, or fitting out of ſhips, or with trade, and which muſt have their trade managed by directors, who are but a trifle intereſted, and can give but a ſmall part of their time to the affairs of the Company, they will poſſibly chooſe friends or relations into office, totally unacquainted with navigation and trade, and the whole to be managed by ſervants, at home and abroad, poſſibly little acquainted with commerce, not intereſted in the ſucceſs of the Company, and at high ſalaries and expences? Can ſuch trade and navigation be carried on by them on the ſame terms that an individual, not only accuſtomed to fitting out, but navigating his ſhip, acquainted with trade, and the manufactures that will anſwer, and who can give his whole attention to it?

Eighth. If this is allowed, that an individual can carry on the trade to underſell a company, by giving a monopoly to a company, would it not be giving away the trade and navigation to other powers of Europe, who have equal right to trade there that you have? And, inſtead of our ſupplying that country with our manufactures, and receiving their commodities, it would be giving the trade to other nations, and poſſibly ſending the capitals of individuals of this country to France and America, to carry on the trade to Africa from thoſe countries.

Ninth. If a monopoly of the trade is to be given to a company, ſhould it be granted for ever to them and their heirs, with power to make laws out of the

controul of Parliament, they may receive the produce of every corner of the world; as veſſels of all nations are free to trade there. This country giving up all right of controul over them, no law made by the Britiſh legiſlature for their government or regulation, or any officers appointed to enforce laws (if made), would it be right in Parliament to paſs ſuch an act, giving ſuch power to individuals, which, inſtead of increaſing the trade and navigation of this country, would, it is conceived, be making a law to give away the trade and navigation of the coaſt of Africa to the other European powers and America.

Tenth. Is not the river of Sierra Leona the only ſafe harbour where ſhips are clear of hurricanes, and where they can lie land-locked, and can take off goods in ſmooth water for one thouſand ſix hundred miles of coaſt, where the ſhips going to Africa call for wood and water, and likewiſe get proviſions, rice, dying-wood, gums, and other articles of trade, which have always been enjoyed by the nations at large,—would it not be wrong in Parliament to take theſe rights from the country at large, and give a monopoly of them to a few individuals, to the prejudice of the nation and out of the controul of this country?

So far it is to be conſidered how ſuch an act might operate with regard to the other powers of Europe and America, and the general trade and welfare of this country. Now let us ſtate how it would operate as a territorial colony againſt our preſent Weſt India iſlands, in which there has already been laid out by Britiſh ſubjects a capital of ſeventy millions, bringing in an annual importation amounting

to ſeven or eight millions; and this country likewiſe having an excluſive monopoly of its trade and conſumption, already producing a third more ſugar, rum, moloſſes, coffee, &c. than Great Britain and Ireland and its colonies can conſume; Jamaica and the ceded iſlands capable of producing conſiderably more, already fortified, and eaſily protected by the mother country (while we have the command of the ſea); our rights allowed by all the powers of Europe, and having no native enemies to contend with; would it not be highly impolitic (if not impoſſible) for this country to give protection to any ſettlement on a continent, where the natives (equal in number to one-fourth of the globe) are or may be againſt you, and the climate of which has been found to be ſo fatal to Europeans ſent there; as witneſs, the garriſons of Senegal, and ſettlement attempted to be made there?

The ideas of our anceſtors were, that nothing could add ſo much to the trade, navigation, wealth, and ſtrength of this country, as the ſettling Weſt India colonies, which raiſed ſugar, coffee, cotton, and other neceſſary articles of life, which, if not raiſed in our colonies, we muſt have gone with money to other nations for, and which would give the balance of trade to this country againſt foreign nations, and while it enriched us, it increaſed our navigation and ſtrength, and incouraged our manufactures. The ſettlement of Weſt India colonies was not like ſettling in North America, or in a cold climate, where the works could be done by a free people, who had only to clear the land of wood, ſow and reap, and where they had an immediate return. The Weſt India co-

lonies

lonies are large manufactories, and a greater or ſmaller capital is to be laid out, according to the produce cultivated, whether in ſugar, coffee, cotton, &c. A perſon having a grant of 500 acres of land, is bound by the tenor of it to cultivate in a limited time, under the penalty of a forfeiture. This he undertook, knowing that before he ſettled the 500 acres, 300 negroes would be requiſite to cultivate it, which would coſt him, before they are ſeaſoned, £. 18,000; ſtock of cattle £. 2000; buildings neceſſary for an eſtate of 500 acres, £. 7000; and to cut the woods, clear the lands, and put it in canes, would coſt him £. 40 an acre—£. 20,000: ſo that the ſettling 500 acres of land in ſugar plantations (although the land was given gratis) would coſt the ſettler about £. 47,000. That the ſubjects of this country, who have engaged in and inveſted ſuch large capitals in the Weſt Indies, which is ſo beneficial to the trade, manufactures, navigation, and ſtrength of this country, and to the increaſe of its wealth and revenue, have every claim on the juſtice and good faith of the mother country; that after having been encouraged by it to inveſt ſuch large capitals, no undue or improper preference ſhould be allowed to any new ſettlement or colony, to their detriment. This has been the idea of former Parliaments, that the Weſt India colonies were ſo beneficial to this country, that they conſidered them as their firſt care and attention.

As when the neutral iſlands were ceded to the crown by the treaty of peace of 1763, the lands being new, and having advantages which ſome of the old iſlands had not, they conſidered it would not be

doing juſtice to the old iſlands to grant the lands in the ceded iſlands to individuals, or juſtice to this country, when they could ſell them for the benefit of the nation; and the lands were ſold at public auction to the higheſt bidder, and ſold for a conſiderable ſum; beſides which, they were ſold ſubject to a quit rent of 6*d.* an acre annually paid to this country. No perſon could purchaſe more than 300 acres in his own name in Dominica, and not more than 500 acres in the other iſlands, and were obliged to clear ſo much of the land annually, under a penalty of £. 5 an acre; and to have a white perſon on every 100 acres, or pay a penalty of £. 50 for every deficiency. No grant to be made to the purchaſer till he had cleared ſo much of his land, and under penalty of forfeiture for non-performance of conditions. A great part of theſe iſlands were already cleared, producing coffee, cocoa, and other commodities, and then in poſſeſſion of ſettlers who had been inhabitants there before the peace; yet they were only allowed to hold the land ſettled by leaſe, paying certain quit rent, and obſerving certain conditions; all which is to be ſeen by the proclamation of the King and Council, for the ſale of lands, in March 1764. That no perſon who had purchaſed 500 acres in the ceded iſlands could ſettle it as a ſugar plantation under £. 50,000 ſterling; and the ſale of theſe lands has not only brought in a conſiderable ſum to government, but there has been about fifteen millions laid out in theſe iſlands. Would it, after this, be conſiſtent with good faith, for the Parliament of Great Britain to encourage the ſettlement of new colonies on the coaſt of Africa, and not only grant the St. George's

Bay Company a large tract of land, without any penalty or reſtriction for cultivation, but giving them a right to grant, alien, or that they may ſell part to ſettle the reſt, and where negroes may be purchaſed at one-third of what they coſt in our Weſt India colonies, which difference was paid to this country in freight and profit to the tranſporters of the negroes? That the ſettlement of 500 acres on the coaſt of Africa (ſuppoſing the building, ſtock of cattle, &c. coſt what they did in the Weſt Indies, the negroes one-third, and the land given gratis) the 500 acres would only coſt £. 5,000, inſtead of £. 50,000 which it has coſt the ſettlers in the ceded iſlands. If the ſettlers at Sierra Leona are prohibited from holding them as ſlaves, they may purchaſe them as convicts, or hold them as indentured ſervants, which would be ſtill more advantageous. Would it be politic in this country, in the ſituation the coaſt of Africa is in by treaties with other nations? If the St. George's Bay Company ſucceeded in cultivating the land, the encouragement it would give to other nations to colonize, would be likely to involve this nation in war, or diſputes not only with the other powers of Europe, but with the natives of Africa. If it would be impolitic to ſettle a colony for the general good, open for the nations at large, how much more impolitic will it be to give to private individuals a grant of land, with powers to them to purchaſe a tract of land, more than all the Weſt Indies, for only advancing a capital of *five thouſand pounds*, out of the controul of Parliament, with powers to them to make laws, to grant or ſell theſe lands at their will and pleaſure, to foreigners, or any perſon they pleaſe;

no

no obligations on the perſons they grant land to, not to hold ſlaves (as it is only binding on the Company and their ſervants), not to traffic in ſlaves; but the people who hold grants from them may; they may likewiſe hold them as convicts for a certain number of years, or may have them as indented ſervants, ſubject to no laws but ſuch as they chooſe to make for themſelves—no laws or protection to ſecure the good uſage of convicts or ſervants, not even the protection of a ſlave (that, being your property, it is for the intereſt of the maſter to uſe his ſlave well and to take care of him); but if they can hold them as convicts or indented ſervants for a time, it would be for their intereſt to make the moſt of them. No proviſion being made for their ſupport after the term is expired: and as it is the friends of the abolition of the Slave Trade in Parliament, who have applied for this grant, may it not be ſaid, that while they are laying the Weſt Indies under reſtrictions, where the negroes are ſecured and protected by laws, they are aſking for a grant of country where they can be independent of all laws, or order, and not ſubject to the controul of the Parliament, or of this Country. The individuals at preſent applying for this grant may be men of humanity, conſcience, and good faith, and may make proper bye-laws and regulations; but their children or their aſſignees may be of a very different ſtamp, and intereſt may lead them to alter theſe bye-laws;—and where is then the humanity—where is the protection to be found?—not in the Parliament of this country; for they have given away the power from them to the St. George's Bay Company. As the ſhare can be aſſigned, the whole may in time be aſ-

ſigned

ſigned to foreigners, and not one Engliſh ſubject belonging to the St. George's Bay Company. The land they aſk to be granted to them is, 25 or 30 leagues of ſea-coaſt, unlimited inland (as they ſay), bound by the Sea to the Weſt, by the river Sierra Leona to the North, by the river Bunce to the Eaſt, and the river Caramania to the South; the courſe of the river Bunce being South-Eaſt and by South, and the river Caramania Eaſt and by South; there is no boundary to the Eaſt, as the rivers do not join; but from the mouth of the river Bunce to the ſea, is ſuppoſed to be a tract of 20 leagues and would be two million of acres. And if the 100 individuals choſe to ſell the lands, and they fetch only what the ceded iſlands ſold for, about £.5 an acre, it would be giving them 4 or 5 millions; and an annual quit rent of 6d. an acre, would be giving them £.50,000 a year more; and as they could purchaſe ſlaves at one-third the price they can in the Weſt Indies, they would ſell their lands higher, which would be giving ſo much to individuals, to the detriment of the nation. But if it ſhould be thought expedient for this country to ſettle new colonies on the coaſt of Africa, they ought to be ſettled under the controul of this country; ſubject to its laws and regulations, which cannot be the caſe by giving a monopoly of the grant and cultivation to a company of individuals, while it is open for foreign nations to trade thereto by treaties. They aſk for this charter for the encouragement of trade, and for the increaſe of the manufactures of this country; would not the ſettling of lands take their capitals and attention from trade to cultivation? Inſtead of opening new trade with the natives, would

it

it not be productive of forming jealouſies amongſt the natives, and probably be the means of their being totally extirpated from Africa? And is not the power given them of purchaſing land likely to create theſe jealouſies, which have been prohibited by proclamation of the king and council, on the ceding of Canada in 1764, fearing it might be the means of involving us in diſputes with the Indians? And was it not the cauſe of this country having a war with the Caribbees of the Iſland of St. Vincent's, where, by means of ſome purchaſes made by individuals of ſome lands from the Caribbees, who claimed a right to ſell, which others diſputed, and which, although in a ſmall iſland they were but a few individuals, obliged this country to ſend an armament, at a very heavy expence, and were at laſt obliged to treat with them? How much more dangerous would it be to make a ſettlement on a continent, equal to one quarter of the globe, where the natives may be all againſt us, and inſtead of increaſing the trade of this country, might be the means of their forming a jealouſy of us, and giving the preference to other nations? As is the caſe at preſent, for the grant given by king Tom to his majeſty, is diſputed by his ſucceſſor, king James, who is the preſent king, and who ſays, king Tom had no right to ſell.

There are two matters to be conſidered, whether this colony is likely to ſucceed, or not; if it is likely to ſucceed, it would be wrong to give ſuch a boon to 100 individuals, who have no claim on this country, to the prejudice of the nation at large; if it does not ſucceed, it would be wrong in Parliament to encourage its ſubjects to lay out their capi-

tals

tals in a country, which they are prevented from protecting by treaties with other nations, and by the ſituation of the country with regard to the natives.

Would it be right in Parliament to be granting lands, or giving authority to their ſubjects to purchaſe in a country over which they have no right of ſovereignty or control, and ſo likely to involve this country, not only with the other powers of Europe, but with the natives, and which could tend to no benefit on earth to this country at large, but may be the means of involving it in great expence and diſputes, &c. may be the ruin of our preſent Weſt India colonies, which are ſecure to us, and we can eaſily protect and defend on principles of equity and juſtice, which would not be our caſe in ſettling colonies in Africa. We have likewiſe to reſort to the fate of other companies, as the Dutch Eaſt and Weſt India Companies, who had not only the advantage of free government, but a great command of money, and a monopoly, not only of the trade, but of the land, yet they are ruined and forced to apply to the State for aid; whereas, had the trade and ſettlement of the country granted them, been laid open to the country at large, they would have ſucceeded, as the enterprizes of individuals in that country have flouriſhed, and have made it the mart of riches in the hands of individuals. That no public company, whoſe affairs are to be managed by ſervants, can ever ſucceed in trade or cultivation, witneſs your own African Company, who had a capital of £.500,000 and the whole trade of the coaſt on land ſecured to them; yet now the Parliament has been obliged to pay their debts £.112,000, and open the trade to the nation.

The

The preſent ſubſcribers are only 100 individuals, at £.50 a piece, applying for a grant of territory on the coaſt of Africa equal to all the Weſt Indies, and which would coſt 70 million, before they could ſettle it. What are they to do with this £.5000, or *five hundred thouſand pounds*, if ſo many ſpeculators could be found? But that it would in a few years be ruinous, and they would have to come to Parliament for aid, and having been encouraged by Parliament giving them a grant, they have a claim on it.

We need not ſtate the great advantage it would be to the Northern Powers of Europe to have colonies who would ſupply them with ſugar, and other Weſt India produce, which is now ſupplied by us, and would give them a market for their fiſh and increaſe of navigation; their deſire of having colonies is to be ſeen by the Swedes late ſettlement of St. Bartholomew's; and if colonizing was once begun on the coaſt of Africa, it might be the ruin of our preſent Weſt India colonies. Is it our intereſt, who have colonies of our own, to ſhew the way to other nations to ruin them, and giving a monopoly of the trade to a company, who cannot face foreign private individuals at a competition at market? Would it not be giving away the trade of the coaſt of Africa to foreign nations, who can never compeer with us, if the trade is left open to the nation at large; that it would be hurtful to this country to grant a monopoly to a company of the trade, or to cultivate at all on the coaſt of Africa, ſuch grant, might, in the end prove ruinous to this country and its preſent colonies, but can never be of any advantage or benefit to it.

What

What will make this matter appear more extraordinary is, that the St. George's Bay Company expect disturbances from the natives on their first attempt of settlement, as they have applied and wish to stipulate for two companies of soldiers to be sent there for their protection; if you will examine the returns of the garrison of Senegal, while in our possession, you will see that it would not cost this country more waste of men and money, to keep two companies at Sierra Leona than two regiments in any part of our dominions, the climate being so unhealthy; so that the settlement will commence with a great loss of men and expence of money to this country, without receiving any benefit from it; and if two companies are requisite for their present protection, ten regiments may be necessary hereafter, as it is not like settling an island easily fortified and defended; and where you have not a whole continent to guard against.

That this being a Company meant solely to extend our commerce to the coast of Africa, as captains of ships going only for a few months on the coast could not be acquainted with the language or manners of the natives, and new branches of trade might be discovered by them, which could not be done by the captains of ships whose residence was for so short a time, and they are to be incorporated, so as to have a common seal, and not to be liable for debts more than the amount of their subscriptions, which being only £.50 each could not hurt them; if it was lost to them, it might be of service to trade in general: this was what was first intended by the public spirited gentlemen who first subscribed. And the title

and

and preamble of the bill is nearly ſo worded as only a trading company; but the clauſes often are ſuch in the bill that it might prove ruinous to this country and her colonies—that it would be imprudent and impolitic to give them any monopoly of trade or to allow them to cultivate land, but merely incorporated as a trading Company, not to be liable but for the ſum they ſubſcribe.

FINIS.